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Mr P Y L E's
ANSWER
To Mr. LAW.

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VINDICATION

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Lord Bishop of Bangor.

Wherein is considered

The true Notion of Religious *Sincerity*,
as available to the Salvation of Men; and of
Church *Authority*, with respect to the Distin-
ctions between *Real*, *Mere*, and *Absolute*
Authority.

In ANSWER

TO THE

EXCEPTIONS of Mr. LAW.

In a LETTER to a Member of the
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

By THOMAS PYLE, M. A.
Lecturer of Lynn-Regis in Norfolk.

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the Rose in
St. Paul's Church-yard. M DCC XVIII.

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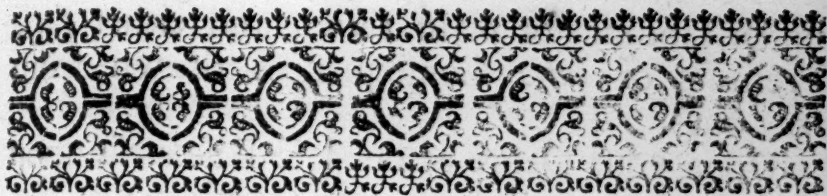
By J. FLETCHER a Member of the
University of Cambridge.

By THOMAS STEELE, M. A.

Teacher of the Latin Language in the

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

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the Strand, near the Temple Church.



A

L E T T E R

T O

A M E M B E R

O F T H E

Univerfity of *Cambridge.*

S I R,

TH E intimate and truly Chriftian
 Friendfhip that has long paffed, and
 ftill continues between us, takes off
 all Occafion of making any *Professions*
that our Differences in Opinion proceed not from any
Prejudice, but from certain Reafons obliging us to
differ concerning the Lord Bifhop of Bangor's
Prefervative and Sermon, and particularly as to
Mr. Law's Performance againft them; we are
ftill the fame Friends while You think his to be
the ftongeft and moft impartial Piece that has
appeared againft his Lordfhip, and I look upon

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it as containing 38 Pages of nothing but Misunderstandings of plain *Terms*, and either *false Premises* or *false Consequences* drawn from *true* ones.

Upon your Desire at our last Discourse upon this Argument, I have put together my Remarks upon each Head on which Mr. Law thought fit to remonstrate against the Bishop.

His prefixing his *Name* in the Title Page is to be a Skreen it seems against all *Suspicion* of *designing any thing injurious to his Lordship's Character*; it would much more have cleared him of all such *Suspicion* to have left out his Apology for Dr. Snape's Charge upon his Lordship, *as no Friend [i. e. as an Enemy] to the good Orders and necessary Institutions of the Church, as taking away the main Supports of our Religion, as laying all waste in the Church, &c.* Expressions which I believe your Friends could not intend for any great Safeguards to a Bishop's Character.

His next Compliment is, *That his Lordship is represented [not by any of his true Friends I hope] as at the Head of a Cause where every Adversary is sure to be reproached — with abundance of hard Names from a Sett of Men — vile Men, whose Panegyricks dishonour, and whose Praises defile.*

And who are *these*? not all who have commended and applauded his Lordship's Sermon, for that must not be affirmed [tho' supposed by

as many as please] because then the People in Power, by whom it was recommended as good *Protestant* Doctrine, or by whose *special Command* the *Sermon* was published, might animadvert upon a poor Author; but to be brief, they are the *Libertines* and *loose thinkers*; and if one might interpret Mr. Law's full Meaning by that of his more Sanguine *Principal* * *Dr. Snape* [and why the *Second* should herein differ from his *Principal*, I cannot well see] then by these *Libertines* you are to understand the *Enemies of all Revelation*; and by their being *his Lordship's best Friends*, is meant, that they are his *only Friends*, his *only Seconds*; when the *Doctor* has fully answered the † *Challenge* sent to him upon that notorious *Calumny*, it may be a proper Season for Mr. Law to be clear in his Meaning, till then it is enough to say, that tho' neither you nor I know of any Writers who have given reproachful *Names* to any of the Bishop's Adversaries, or would in the least commend them for it if we did know them, yet we very well know a *Sett of Men* that have left very sad *Reproaches* upon *themselves* for leaving the Merits of the Cause, and taking Refuge in *Personal Imputations and Calumnies*, and then tracing them so far and happily as to be found *Slanders*, and very hasty [if not directly false] *Accusers*, not only of their *Brethren*, but also of their

* *Dr. Snape's Second Letter*, p. 53.

† *Mr. Sykes's Postscript*.

Superiors. If *Libertines* be Friends to my Lord, his Lordship knows them no further as Friends, then as agreeing to the Truth of his present Argument; and that they are his Friends in any Sense whatever, is just as strong a Conclusion against him as it is against his Adversaries, that there is not a Papist or Jacobite but imagines they intend to dissolve the Protestant Church, and are ready to offer up Incense to them for so meritorious a Design.

Your Friend, tho' just entring upon the Point of Sincerity, presents us with a Specimen of his double dealing in his general Charge upon the Bishop, as being against the good Orders and necessary Institutions of the Church; which Charge in the next * Page is, that he declares against the Authority of the Church. Here the general Authority is [I fear] designedly confounded with that Authority which respects only good Orders and necessary Institutions. But are these the same? Cannot the Bishop, or any other true Protestant, deny several Instances of Authority, unjustly but commonly attributed to the Church, without denying it an Authority in Matters of Orders allowed to be good, and Institutions allowed to be necessary? Or when he had most explicitly singled out his Instances of authoritative Judgments in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation, can it be candid in any Adversary to make him thereby deny every Instance of Authority in all Cases whatever?

* Page 2.

But to come to his particular Objections.

1. Mr *Law's* first *Objection* against the Bishop is, the stress his Lordship lays upon the Comprehensive Virtue of *Sincerity*, or *Integrity before God*; which being a Point, wherein not only this Writer, but all others that have opposed his Lordship, have grossly misunderstood him, and confounded both themselves and their Readers, it will be proper to state the true Notion of the *Terms* and *Expressions* as used and designed by the Bishop, and thence to show how weakly or perversly they have opposed him, by the mere Abuse of *Words*.

Religious Sincerity is a real Disposition and Endeavour to know the Will of God, and the true Way of his Worship, by making the best Use of our Faculties, and of all the Helps afforded us by Providence for that Purpose, and to practice accordingly.

When it is said that the Favour of God follows this real Sincerity, no more is said, but that God by the Justice and Goodness of his all perfect Nature, and Government over rational Creatures, must be supposed to approve and reward this religious Principle; because, as such, it is the proper Object of his Divine Love and Regard, and no Actions, Profession, or Proceedings of Men [call them by what religious Names you please] can be truly acceptable to him but such only as flow from this Principle.

When it is said, in Consequence, that this Favour of God equally follows every equal Degree of this Sincerity, thus much is meant as an evident Deduction, that, as there are different Degrees of Abilities,

Abilities, and Opportunities in different Men, and also Degrees of Sincerity, or truly religious Endeavours, the Favour of God, his Acceptance of them, and Dealings with them, follows them in Proportion to such Degrees: It being necessary to suppose it must thus follow, or not at all, i. e. that if God has any regard to true and sincere Religion, he must regard it according to the Measures in which he finds it in the several Subjects of his Government.

The Effect of God's Favour, thus following *real Sincerity* is, that all good Men, in every Age, Nation, and Profession, will find themselves proportionably and happily concerned in it, to their future and final Advantage. Not that all are to be *equally glorified and rewarded*, because *equally sincere*, [as this Writer most hastily and ignorantly concludes from his *Lordship's* Expressions,] but that, having all their unfortunate Errors and unavoidable Mistakes freely pardoned, all are to be rewarded in *Proportion* to the virtuous *Qualifications* they are severally endowed with, by the honest and *sincere* Use of the different Degrees of Light and Knowledge they have enjoyed; and as God shall see them *fitted* and prepared for. God is supposed to reward Sincerity *as such*, not by making the sincere *Indian* equally glorified in another State with the sincere *Christian*; nor one sincere *Christian* of lower Faculties and meaner Advancements in the Knowledge of God and Religion, with another equally sincere *Christian* of nobler Accomplishments and Qualifications; but by making every ones *Sincerity* the Ground of his being accepted *at all*, and then

then rewarding him according to the good use he has made of the *Number of Talents* committed to him. He that in the Gospel had but *five Talents*, and was recompenced but with *five Cities*, was equally *Faithful*, and as *certainly*, tho' not *equally rewarded* with him that had *ten*; it was as much as he could justly imagine or wish for, to be *proportionably* rewarded; and tho' he was equally *sincere* in his *Station*, yet that *Station* given him by his *Lord*, was not such as could qualify him for the same *Dignity* that his Fellow Servant had: Notwithstanding which, his *Sincerity* was rewarded *as such*.

This Notion of the Availableness of *Sincerity*, is further illustrated and confirmed by *St. Paul*, in that most useful and remarkable Discourse of his in *Rom. 2.* where he says, *ver. 11. there is no respect of Persons with God. i. e. all Men, of what Nation or Profession soever, shall be punished or rewarded in Proportion to their Neglect or Improvement of the several Degrees of Light and Knowledge afforded them in this Life. Ver. 12. For as many as have sinned without [revealed] Law, shall also perish without [being condemned by revealed] Law, and as many as have sin'd in [under the Light of] the [revealed] Law, shall be judged by the [Rules of that] Law; and in like manner for the Favour of God, and his Rewards: ver. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the [revealed] Law, do by Nature the things contained in the [Moral] Law, these are a Law unto themselves, and consequently, shall be dealt withal according to their Improvements*

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under their lesser Advantages of mere natural Reason ; for *ver. 26. If the Uncircumcision, which is by Nature, keep the Righteousness of the Law, [if even a Heathen be sincere in the Practice of Moral Duties, by the upright use of his Reason,] shall not his Uncircumcision be counted for Circumcision? i. e. he shall as certainly have his Reward, proportionate to his Improvements, as if he had actually lived within the Covenant of a Revelation.* And ask your Friend, Sir, whether the three following *Verses* do not evidently prove, that, while *External Church-Membership* may, very often be attended with no other *Praise but that of Men*, the *Praise [or Favour] of God* follows *inward Sincerity* as *such*.

In fine, whether in the *Christian* or *Unbelieving* World, we all allow the different Degrees of Abilities, Advantages, and Opportunities of different Men, to be several Disposals of *Providence*, as much as all the different Perfections of Animals, rational and irrational are. And 'tis no more a Derogation from the Justice and Wisdom of the Divine Government, to proportion Men's *future* State to what hath been given to them to improve withal in *this*, than it was unequal in God not to have made every living Creature a *Man*, every *Man* a learned *Philosopher*, and every *Philosopher* an *Angel*.

Having thus stated the Notion of *Sincerity*, or a truly *religious Principle*, in the Sense of his *Lordship*, and of all those who with him, endeavour to maintain the Dignity and Efficacy of *real and true Religion*, in Opposition to that
which

which is merely *Formal, External, and Political*; 'twill be easy to find with what Success his *Adversaries* have opposed him, and with how much Sense and Reason they have raised a Clamour against one of the most Eminent and Virtuous Bishops that have adorn'd the Christian World. Let Mr. *Law*, whose Performance has been so much approved by the rest, and particularly by Dr. *Snape*, be taken for an Instance in the Argument before us.

Instead of first duly considering what that religious *Sincerity* is, upon which my Lord of Bangor founds the Security of all honest Minds, this Author, giving a loose Rein to his own heated Imagination, makes use of an Idea of *Sincerity*, the very *Reverse* of what the Bishop and every reasonable Man upon Earth would have ever thought of; and in his chief *Characters* whereof, you would think he were describing not a *Virtue*, but an *Abomination*. Page 3. By a *sincere* Religionist, he means [and my Lord Bishop must be made to mean no more than] one that is *not a Hypocrite*. Now is the *not being a Hypocrite* the full Notion of being *Sincere*? Did ever any *Divine*, besides Mr. *Law*, represent so noble a *Virtue* by a *mere Negative*? What thinks he of the openly *Careless* and *Negligent*, as to all Enquiries into particular Ways of religious Worship? Must we call *them sincere*, because they are so bare-faced as to be *no Hypocrites*? *Hypocrisy* consists in *not being* or *not doing* what a Man zealously professeth himself to *be* or to *do*: but the Man that does not so much as *pretend*

tend to do what Mr. Law and I may esteem necessary, cannot be stiled a *Hypocrite*, and yet we may justly look upon him as not *sincere*, viz. in the best Use of the Informations into, and Perswasions he had concerning the Measures of his Duty.

Can this Writer then, or his Admirers forbear blushing, when he says, *he has not wrested his Lordships Meaning*, when he represents him as *bringing all Religions upon the Level, with respect to sincere Men*? Must *Christianity*, [the Religion that affords so many superior Advantages toward Qualifications and Degrees of Goodness, that will fit its Professors for a greater and singular State of future Glory,] be necessarily reduced to an Equality with others, even the most *erroneous* Religions, because under *them* a truly honest well-meaning Person, [not wilfully rejecting or neglecting any Advantages toward a better Light,] may by the Mercy of God, *not suffer Eternally* for his Misfortune, or may be recompenced in *Proportion* for what he does *well*? Does the Honour of *Revelation* suffer, by supposing every Degree of Moral Virtue under the mere Light of Nature to be suitably rewarded? This were a *Proposition indeed of unfriendly Aspect to Christianity*, but 'tis none of the Bishop's, 'tis *entirely Mr. Law's own*; and I request of him to be so condescending as to allow, God may show his *Favour to Sincerity in all Men*; and yet, as to the *Talents* severally committed to them, and the *Rewards* accompanying them, to permit him *to do what he will with his own*.

Page.

Pag. 4. This Gentleman's Notion of *Sincerity* is, a Man's being in Earnest; and then if the Bishop's Doctrine be true, a dreadful Storm of Consequences is to fall upon the Church; for he that burns a Christian, or knocks out his Brains upon Account of Religion, must be concluded to be in Earnest; those that called out for our Saviour's Crucifixion could never be in Jest; and even Quakers, Ranters, Muggletonians, Deists, and Fifth Monarchy Men, may be in as much Earnest as a Church of England Man. Well, and what then? Why, thence it follows, that, according to my good Lord of Bangor, the Persecutor and the Crucifier were as much in the Favour of God, and had the same Title to a Reward, as the Apostles and the Martyrs; and the Deist, Quaker, Presbyterian, &c. are all in the Eye of God as good Men and true as the Church of England Man; and so adieu to Christianity, and to the Church!

Mr. Law, by making use of the Words, *being in earnest*, when applied to *Infidels, Persecutors, and Sectaries*, nay, and of the Term *Sincerity* too, with respect to the same Persons, appears most evidently to have designed to confound its Meaning, and to play with the Word under a quite contrary Notion to that in which he supposed all would understand it when applied to *Christians, Churchmen, and Friends*. Let him judge whether I misrepresent him or no by his own Words, wherein he further describes the very *Sincerity* which he says his Lordship would fain have the Favour of God annexed to, and follow

follow equally; but he *himself*, good Man, in great Zeal to *Christianity* and the *Church*, would discourage, as not fit to be relied upon, p. 8, 9. *Our Sincerity*, says he, *may be often charged with Guilt*; [’tis very odd that a thing supposed to be a *Virtue*, nay, a *necessary Principle in Religion*, p. 6. should be charged with *Guilt*.] Not as if we were guilty because we are sincere, but because it may be our Fault that we are hearty and sincere in such and such ill grounded Opinions. [That is, *Sincerity* cannot possibly be charged with *Guilt*, but *Rashness* and *Negligence*, which however is the same thing with *Sincerity*, when a Writer is pleased to make it so, may be so charged.] For you must note, that sometimes *Sincerity*, as noble a Principle as it is, may be the Effect of some ill Conduct of our own, some Irregularities, or Abuse of our Faculties, may be contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour, by several faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Understandings, and throw themselves into a very odd way of thinking. And here’s a beautiful Description of religious *Sincerity* for us! a Principle to be valued so highly, that without it all the most specious Appearances of Religion (says our Author, p. 6.) are nothing worth. But pray take Notice here that this *Virtue* is bred different Ways in different Men; in *Martyrs*, and such as love the *Church*, ’tis a real Disposition and Endeavour to know and practise God’s Will, without worldly or lustful Prepossessions, or neglect of using any Means within our Power; but in *Jews*, *Deists*, *Dissenters*, and the like, ’tis nothing but the
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Spawn of *Irregularity, Guilt, ill Conduct, Prejudice, and the Abuse of Faculties*. And therefore, Reader, be sure [under Pain of not understanding one Word of Mr. Law's Charge upon the Bishop, as he designed you should] to take this useful *Word* in the Lump, without enquiring what it signifies, and then his Lordship is condemned in a Trice, and nothing is wanting but to get *Church Execution* done upon him, for then the following *Consequences* are all *his own*, viz.

The *Jews* [the headstrong and prejudiced part of them] crucified our blessed *Saviour*, who meant them nothing but Peace and Salvation. And a Man would think such Criminals against Heaven should be certainly excluded from it. No, no, there is a *Sense* wherein they might be *sincere*, i. e. *irregular, and guilty of ill Habits, &c.* and in *that* Sense [it seems] the *Bishop* declares them fit for Heaven, for they *did it in earnest*.

Again, Here are a Sett of Men amongst us called *Deists, Quakers, and Presbyterians*, that refuse what *We* esteem to be the most reasonable Religion and Worship, and as so doing what can we think of them? Never be troubled about them, says my Lord, their *Sincerity*, i. e. *their faulty and ill Conduct*, will carry them safe into another World; for if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, 'tis no matter what Religion he is of.

I will help our Author to one sort of *People* more to augment his Catalogue, whom, I dare say, he omitted out of pure good Nature and Christian Compassion, and that is the *Papists*.

These

These Men maintain several strange Opinions destructive of the *Church of England*, and nothing will satisfy them but the very Hearts Blood of every Body [as being damnable *Heretics*] that differ from them. Now tho' the Bishop of *Bangor* seems to have no real Kindness for these Mens Religion, yet 'tis plain he has so far forgot himself as to write a *Preservative* in their Behalf. Suppose them *sincere* [is the Bishop here again made to say] and be in no Pain about them; for who can doubt but the *Masacre of Paris* and the *Butchery in Ireland* were committed in *perfect Earnest*? And so of as many People as you please, even of King *GEORGE*'s Friend, that is supposed to tamper with the Friends of the *Pretender*; for *the Favour of God follows Sincerity, nay equally follows every equal Degree of it.*

But I must not omit to observe how very just and exact your Friend is in this *Comparison*, wherein *God* and the *Church of England* are most familiarly put in the place of each other. Upon the Bishop's Principles a *Briton* attempting [out of a full Persuasion it is his Religious Duty] to set up a *Pretender* against King *GEORGE*, may be told, his *Sincerity* will yet secure him the Favour of *God*. Why then, says Mr. *Lam*, *one must suppose the Man that tells him so to be no Friend to King GEORGE's Government*; for if an *Enemy* of King *GEORGE*'s may be in the Favour of *GOD*, a *Friend* to King *GEORGE* is no more to King *GEORGE*'s Government than an *Enemy*. Take it now with respect to
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the Church, the Bishop tells all Parties their *Sincerity is enough* [*i. e.* enough to excuse them for any unhappy Mistakes in Separation, and to procure them that *proportionable* Favour or Reward they shall be severally found hereafter fitted and qualified for.] Says he so? replies our Author, then their Sincerity ought to satisfy the CHURCH too, and keep her from censuring and branding them for wilful SCHISMATICKS. And so GOD and his Favour is ALL, and the CHURCH OF ENGLAND's Favour signifies nothing. The Bishop has not spoken one Word in Recommendation of her Communion, but, as far as I know, may think it his Duty to undermine the Foundations of the CHURCH.

Thus, Sir, has your Friend drawn upon his Lordship these monstrous and absurd Consequences, by either ignorantly or designedly perverting and confounding the main Term, and casting it, like Dust, in his Reader's Eyes, under a Sense quite opposite to what He plainly meant it to signify, and which Mr. Law himself must needs have been conscious would have firmly supported the Truth of whatever my Lord has asserted upon this Head.

To convince you of which, or at least to give Satisfaction to others, I will now on the other hand suppose [contrary to what appears] that he has kept close to the Term, and meant the same by *Sincerity* as his Lordship did. Let Jews, Deists, Crucifiers, and Sectaries, be all granted sincere; in the Sense wherein Believers and Churchmen are so, and what are then the Bi-
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shop's Consequences? Why, nothing less (it seems) than that the *Crucifier* and the *Infidel* must have the same *Favour*, nay, the same *Degree of Reward* with him that is *burnt* for the *Truth*; and sincere *Turks*, *Deists*, &c. are in all *Respects* upon the *same Bottom* with the *Christian*. That's a great Assertion! his Lordship must be thought very free indeed in dispensing out the *Divine Favours* without sufficient *Warrant*, if he intended nothing less than *this*. He affirms, 'tis true, that *proportionable Favour* follows every *Degree of Sincerity*, but where do you find him asserting, that therefore *equal Rewards and Degrees of future Glory* must be dispensed to *all*, however *differently qualified* by the *equally sincere Use* of the *different Degrees* of Religious Knowledge and Advantages afforded them by Providence in this World? For that *Sincerity* may be acceptable *as such*, and yet all *equally sincere Men* not be *equally rewarded*, is what I have proved above; and tho' Mr. Law's Words would make the Bishop conclude the contrary, there is nothing in his *own* that leads to any such thing.

Nay, has not your Friend himself fallen into the very Notion of the *Favour of God*, as meant by his *Lordship*, toward *sincere Persons* in Error, and yet stopt short of the *Consequences* he so liberally throw suppon him? For he hopes [p. 6.] *there is M E R C Y in Store for all sorts of People* [I suppose he means *sincere ones*] *however erroneous in their Way of worshipping God*. And pray, Sir, can there be no *Mercy* without supposing there

there must be the *highest Reward*? If there can, then I hope there may be *Favour* too upon the same Foot, without concluding that if sincere *Turks* or *Jews* may have *Mercy* and *Favour*, tho' *unbelieving*, they must therefore be *rewarded* even for *not believing*, nay, and *equally* rewarded with those that *do believe*, or that there must be *no superior Blessedness* of *believing*, *no Happiness* of the *Gospel Revelation* [*i. e.* in Mens embracing a Religion abounding with greater Means for qualifying them for greater Happiness] because there is *proportionable* tho' *not equal* Blessedness and Happiness to sincere Obeyers of the mere *Light of Nature*.

His Consequences drawn from *Scripture* discover either great Inattention, or else a wilful Design to impose upon the Illiterate, and are therefore exceedingly unworthy to be offered against a Learned *Bishop*.

Pag. 7. Our Saviour declared, that those who believed should be saved, but those who believed not should be damned. And the Apostle assures us, there is no Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be saved, but *Jesus Christ*. I appeal to any impartial Reader, if your Friend's apparent Design from these Two Passages be not to insinuate, that, according to the *Gospel Covenant*, the World is divided into Two Parts, that of *Christians*, and that of *Unbelievers*; and that none but *Christians* [nay, and there is reason to suspect that by *Christians* he means *Church of England Men* only, or perhaps *Non-jurors*] shall escape *Eternal Damnation*, while

there is not an intelligent Interpreter in the World but understands the *Damnation* so severely threatned in the Gospel to respect none but those to whom the Gospel is fairly offered, and by whom it is obstinately rejected or disobeyed. Nay, in direct Contradiction to his *own Conclusion*, in the foregoing Page he says, *there is Mercy to all*, ——— however erroneous, and yet here he agrees with his Lordship, that *all Unbelievers are not insincere*, and at the same time makes him conclude, that tho' [according to an extravagant Supposition] some of them were *sincere* and yet *damn'd*, *they were still in the same Favour of God as those that were saved*.

Of the same Piece is his Treatment of St. Paul's Case. *I am the least*, saith he, *of the Apostles, not fit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ*. Behold! says Mr. Law, *the Apostle charges himself with Guilt notwithstanding his Sincerity*. What! was he guilty in the very same respect in which he was *sincere*, *not fit to be called an Apostle* upon Account of that very Principle, for which *himself* declares ** he obtained Mercy*? A reasonable Man would have thought it were enough to understand St. Paul as expressing and lamenting the Unhappiness of his unbelieving State, and of the immoral Acts therein committed, in Comparison with that of his being a *Christian* and an *Apostle*; but to pronounce himself guilty upon

* 1 Tim. I. 12.

Account of *mere ignorant Unbelief*, i. e. *unavoidable Ignorance or Error in Matters of Opinion*, is what the *Apostle* no more intended, nor is any more consistent with Truth, than to suppose he should in *this* place desire that neither the *Galatians*, nor any other Church he preached to, should stile or treat him as an *Apostle*, who in *another* declares *he was not a Whit behind the chiefest Apostles*, 1 Cor. 11. 5.

St. Paul's Case was plainly this: He was guilty in *one* Respect, notwithstanding his Sincerity in *another*. As he was a *Persecutor* [i. e. as suffering himself to fall into those Principles that led him to *persecute*] he could not be *sincere*; because to destroy Mens Lives for their mere Profession of a different Religion [which their Conscience is supposed to oblige them to] is such an Invasion upon the common Right of Mankind, is such a Breach of Humanity, and a Violation of all the Dictates of sociable and reasonable Nature, that *no* Man can fall into the Principles that prompt him to it without wilful Inconsideracy, and a gross Neglect of the Means of knowing better. And the *High-way Man* or *Adulterer* may be as well conceived to be *sincere* as a religious *Murderer* can be. So far indeed St. Paul may be said to have been *sincere*, that consistently with himself he acted up to his Principle, he had no double hypocritical Views, he *offended not* out of *malicious Wickedness*, his ultimate Aim was the Glory of God, and while he was *sinfully* persuaded that to *persecute* was *doing God Service*, yet he was
sincere

sincere in acting agreeably to such a Persuasion. This *latter* was his mere *ignorant Unbelief*; and tho' upon the *former* Account he was *guilty*, yet in *this* he was capable of *Mercy*, and found *Mercy*, 1 Tim. 1. 13. As did also (several at least of) the *Crucifiers* of our Lord, *Acts* 3. 17, 19. But it was for Mr. Law's Turn to confound these Things together.

And now, *Sir*, after a serious Reflection upon Mr. Law's Way of treating this Argument, ask your self *who* it is, his *Lordship* or his *Adversaries*, that advance *Doctrines which no Words can enough decry*, and *shocking Opinions, giving Numbers of Christians great Offence, and contradicting Common Sense and plain Scripture*. Demand of him again, *who they* are, that in the worst Notion and Extent, *make all Religions, all Churches alike*? The *Bishop*, with all considering *Protestants*, fixes the Nature of true *Religion*, [with respect to *any Man*,] in the *Sincerity* he uses in the Choice of his Principles. *Sincerity* will save the *Ignorant* from *Damnation*, and secure to *All*, such Reward as they shall be found severally fitted for, and capable of: While yet some *Professions* of Religion may be attended with far happier Advantages toward qualifying Men for much higher *Degrees* of future Felicity than others. Whereas they who affirm *Sincerity is not to be relied upon*, but make *true Religion, true Christian Church Member-ship* to consist in a bare Submission to the Authority of the *Guides* of the Church they happen to live in; they, I say, make *all Religions alike* with a Witness; because then every
Church

Church must be *equally good* to every Man so relying upon it: For if true Religion saves us, and all true Religion consists in Reliance upon, and Submission to the Church we are of, then all Religions *must* be *alike* to all Men whose *Submission* is equally implicit. Let the Instance be given in the Church of England; if *Submission* to the Church of England be what makes an *English* Man a *Christian*, the Church of England can be no better than any other Church, where there is the same Degree of *Submission* paid by Members to its Guides. Let Mr. Law try whether what such Gentlemen as Mr. Trapp have said, will in the least rescue their Cause from this fatal Consequence. The Lecturer * grants the Bishop to be right in affirming, *That the Church of England is founded upon the Noble Claim of the Right of Christians to judge for themselves.* It is so, says he, *but then 'tis founded upon Another Claim too, which is no less Noble; I mean, that of a Right in her self, of being absolutely obeyed, in Matters either indifferent in themselves, or DIFFICULT to be understood:* As much as to say, *the Church of England is founded upon a Noble Claim, which is superseded by Another directly contrary Claim, and so is no Claim at all; or in other Words, is founded upon a Claim so Noble, as evidently to make all Churches alike.*

II. The next Charge upon the Bishop is, † *the Unconcern he shows about regular, i. e. uninterrupted*

* Trapp's Sermon and Postscript, pag. 37.

† Page 9.

ed Succession of a certain Order of Men in the Church, as Ministers. In this Point the *Bishop* was so clear and exprefs, that no candid Reader could mistake him as to the *Succession, Order, and Regularity* intended by him ; he plainly meant the *Succession* maintained by the *Nonjurors* who have † *separated themselves*, the *Succession* claimed by the Church of *Rome*, and so insisted upon by her, as to exclude and nullify all Church Ministry that is not derived from her ; an *uninterrupted Succession*, the Truth of, and necessary Reliance upon which, was denied and strenuously opposed by our pious *Reformers*, and upon that Denial the very *Reformation* is built. This is what his Lordship calls a *Dream, a Nicety, and a Trifle.*

Mr. *Law* is one of the many who in their Accusations of the *Bishop* upon this Head, founded all their Arguments, and thrust upon us all their Conclusions in Clouds of *Terms* and *Phrases* blended and confounded together, as if they were one and the same, while no Things are more really distinct from and more opposite to one another. *Authority* derived from *Rome* he makes to be the same with the *Authority of Christ* ; *Succession of Ministers* is the same with him as *Romish uninterrupted Succession* ; and *Church* the same as the *Gospel* ; and thus for *Eight Pages* together, he lays about him without Mercy ; always triumphing over his Lordship, under no Banner but that of the *Pope.*

† *Preservative, p. 98.*

Thus, for Instance : His Lordship, in that excellent Paragraph of his *Preservative*, p. 97, 98, tells the Laity, that God's Favour, Benediction, and Absolution, not depending upon Regularities and Niceties, but dispensed by himself according to the inward Dispositions and Qualifications of them who wait for him, is so far from leaving them [of the Laity] to any undue Freedom and Latitude, to any Disregard of the Peace and Unity of Christians, that it will make them conscientiously solicitous about it, and resolved to prefer nothing before it, except Purity and Conscience. — That their Integrity before God, a sincere Disposition to search after his Will, and to receive Truth, in the Love of the Truth, whensoever and by whomsoever offered, will lead them [as it ought all of us] not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of REGULAR AND UNINTERRUPTED Successions. Now what is the Result of this? Nothing less, says Mr. Law, than that no Kind of ORDINATION, or MISSION of the Clergy, is of any Consequence or Moment. What? no Kind, because not that Kind which is by an uninterrupted Succession thro' the Church of Rome? (For thro' that Church we must have it, or from none; there being none, in these Parts of the World at least, that is at all thought of in this Question besides that of Rome.) The Answer is still, No. For if the Ordination be not regular, or derived from those who had this Authority from Christ [by this way of uninterrupted Succession,] it is plain that no particular Kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another: For this is the

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worst

*worst Defect that can be: And all the Difference betwixt us [Episcopal] and other Teachers, betwixt regular and irregular, perfect and imperfect, lies wholly in this [or in nothing,] that we derive from Rome, and they cannot: For they can differ from us in no other Respect. As if Religion, and the external Discipline of Religion, were the same thing! As if the End, Use and Purpose of the Christian Ministry, were not the same, whether it chances to come by unbroken Succession or not! You see, Sir, into what narrow and miserable Streights your Friend has reduced the whole Protestant World, and the Church of England in particular. To Rome we must go, as to the Rock from whence we are taken, and the Hole of the Pit from whence we are digged. The Methods made use of by any Protestant Societies for electing and constituting their Ministers in holy Things; our English Laws, our Canons, our Rules, our Ordinations are all null and void, without this Sanction derived from the holy See. If we own not this Fountain, our Streams are all corrupt, nay all equally corrupt: The Mechanick is as much a Clergyman as the Bishop, and his Lordship's * Servant may ordain and baptize, with as much Authority as his Master. If Quaker, Independent, and Presbyterian Teachers, be upon the Level with us as to the want of uninterrupted Succession from Christ thro' the Channel of Rome, they are upon the Level with*

us in *all other Circumstances*. *Enthusiasm*, or true *Learning*; a private *Impulse*, or a *Designation* by *sober Choice*; leaping from the *Shopboard* into the *Desk*, to the *Pulpit*, to the *Font*, and the *holy Table*; or being appointed thereunto by *Rule*, *Government*, *Order*, and *Law*, settled in a *National Church* after *Primitive Example*; make *no Difference* at all.

And why? Because † if the *Succession* be once broke, *People* must either go into the *Ministry* of their own *Accord*, or be sent by such as have no more *Power* to send others, than to go themselves. And can these be called *Ministers of Christ*, — *Ambassadors* to act in his Name, who have no *Authority* from him? That is; if it should be true [which, our *Author* must say, *God forbid!*] that *Rome* is, or ever was, a false and idolatrous *Church*, nay the grand *Deceiver* and *Antichrist*, then *Christianity* is at an *End*; all that is derived from so utterly and fundamentally corrupted a *Root*, being fruitless as to all *Means of Grace*. Or, if it had so been, [as the *Papists* positively say it was,] that at the *Reformation*, not one *Romish Bishop* had reformed, or would have ordained any *Protestant Bishop*, the *Work* must have been at a full *Stand*; all *People*, that were entirely convinced of the *Superstition* and *Idolatry* of *Rome*, must either have lived in no *Christian Communion* at all, or, contrary to their own *Consciences*, must have returned to the

Vomit they had left, and to the *Mire* they were washed from. Or lastly, if, in any Age of the Church, the Heathen Persecution had proved so dreadfully successful, or Schisms had at any time so broke the Succession, as not to have left one Catholick *Bishop* alive, or not one whose Succession could be known; then it would have been impossible for *Christianity* ever to have revived again in the World, (even tho' the *Scriptures* had been left entire, and the serious Belief and Practice of the Laws of Christ had been restored in the Hearts of never so many Men,) unless *Christ*, or some of his *Apostles*, had appeared again upon Earth, to sign a new *Commission* to certain Men, to be the Preachers and Ministers of the Gospel, and begin a new *Succession*.

Not to insist now upon any Proof or Disproof of the Reality of an *uninterrupted Succession*, in any Part of the Christian Church; (tho' indeed there is no Shadow of *Proof* of any such thing;) but to keep to the Consideration of this Author's Consequences following upon Premises of his own supposing: It is, to *Protestants*, the same thing whether there is or is not to be found such a *Line* of Men in the World. The only Question is, Whether *Christ* hath restrained and confined the Gospel Favours and Blessings to such an *external Circumstance* as that of an unbroken *Succession* of *Ministers*? Whether, supposing this *regular Ministry* cannot, at any certain Time, be had, but upon Condition of continuing in, and joining with, a *Community*, whose

whose Worship is *superstitious, idolatrous, and unlawful*; Christians may not *reform* from such a corrupt Community, and establish a *Ministry*, in all Respects acceptable to Christ, and effectual to the Attainment of his Grace, whose Religion they sincerely adhere to? That there should be a *Ministry* in the *Church*, is indeed the Will of *Christ*, as truly as that there should be *Government* in the *State* is the Will of *God*: But whether all *Government* in the *one* or the *other* is at an End, or becomes ineffectual, whenever a certain *Line* or *Succession* of Men, so ruling, is interrupted; this is what all wise and thinking Men deny in *Civil* Matters, and what all *Protestants* deny in *Ecclesiastical*. This was the Case of the far greater Part of the *Reformation*. Upon Principles quite opposite to Mr. *Lam's*, did our *Reformers* in *England* defend both themselves, and vindicate the Ministry of their Fellow *Protestants* Abroad. They argued as freely upon the Supposition of *not one Popish Bishop's* reforming, as if there had been a *Thousand*. Let him therefore repair to the History and Writings of our first *Reformers*; let him consult the Spirit and Foundation, upon which they supported themselves *as such*; let him search the Writings of the most learned and valuable Champions of the Cause of the *Church of England* against *Papists*, who flourished after the *Reformation*; and if he can find *them* asserting, that we not only derived our Ordination from *Rome*, but *so* derived it, that for want of it thro' that Channel, we could have had neither

Church,

Church, Ministry, nor Sacraments, nor Christianity; I will then, but not till then, allow Mr. Law to argue like a Protestant upon the Principles of the Reformation.

And whereas he is pleased to take the main thing in question for granted, viz. * *That the Ministers of Christ* [i. e. the *uninterrupted Succession* of them thro' a particular Sett of Hands,] *are as much the positive Ordinance of Christ, as the Sacraments are*: If his Meaning be, *that there are, in the Gospel, as clear and plain Notices that such a Succession is as necessary to the Being of Christianity, and the Administration of the Sacraments, as there are that such Sacraments are to be used by Christians*; I call upon him to prove the Truth of that Assertion, with a Promise that he shall never want those who will impartially examine the Strength of his Demonstrations.

In fine, the Sum total of your Friend's Argument upon this Head, strikes not only at the Root of all Protestant Religion, but of all Civil Governments; in which an *uninterrupted Succession* of Persons, equally authorized from God, cannot be made out. For, according to his own Dilemma; † if, upon Supposal that all things are not in common in the Church, it must follow that no Christians, in this or any other Age, can know their respective Duties, with respect to the several Acts of Church Communion, without an *uninterrupted Succession* of Persons THUS authorized

from *Christ*; then, since all *Kings* and *Magistrates* are as truly from *God*, as *Bishops* are from *Christ*; since by *Him* they reign in *State*, as properly as by *Christ* *Spiritual Men* ordain in the *Church*; how can any Subject of any Nation, in this or any foregoing Age, know their respective Duties as to Civil Obedience, if there be no uninterrupted Succession of such Governors and Magistrates as they are at any time subject to, and such as are so authorized from *God*? For as, without Authority from *Christ*, appearing by a Line of uninterrupted Ordainers, we are all alike in the CHURCH, and any one may officiate as well as another; so in every State, till Authority appears from *God*, by an uninterrupted Line of Civil Rulers, all are alike there too: No *Kings*, no *Laws*, no *Courts*, no *Property*, but every one is upon the Level. Government in *State*, has been from the Beginning of the *World*; as Government in *Church*, has been from the Rise of *Christianity*. Wo be to those *Princes* therefore, who can trace their own particular Dominion up to a short Original, and who find a Beginning of their own Line! Wo be to those *States* and *Potentates*, who, thro' some Branch or other, cannot stretch up to the *Patriarchal Age*, even to *Noah*, and so to *Adam*! How well this Scheme is calculated for one, who takes upon him the Stile and Title of King *James*, may be no great Difficulty to conceive. The learned *Hickes* and *Lesley* could, with as much Ease, shew him to derive from *God*, by way of *Adam*, and so down, as they could draw Arch Bishop

Sancroft

Sancroft from *St. Peter*. But who *else* has any great Interest in such an Argument, I leave your Friend, and his Friends, to acquaint us at Leisure.

Thro' all these Clouds and Darknes do our Church Friends, the *Nonjurors*, grope on to their beloved Conclusion. * If no uninterrupted Succession, then there are no authorized Ministers from Christ; if no such Ministers, then no Christian Sacraments, and so no Christian Covenant. Bring but this, now, out of Darknes into Light; and what can be truer? If no [Popish] Succession, then no [Popish] Priests; and if no such Priests, then no [Popish] Sacraments, no Popish Tricks; no Transubstantiation, no Hocus Pocus, and so no [Popish] Salvation.

Whether any of these Consequences are palm'd upon him, or are not his own, you are freely to judge; or which of the Two Writers has attempted to make the best Exchange. His Lordship, in the room of Popery, has given us Sincerity, [not Mr. Law's Sincerity described p. 8, 9. but] a religious Principle, exerting it self in the utmost Endeavours to know and practise the Will of God and Christ. Instead of this, Mr. Law refers us to an uninterrupted Succession, as the only Security of a true Ministry, Sacraments, and all Gospel Graces, in Church; and which, [till he shall please to find out the Succession for them,] puts an End to all the Civil Govern-

ments upon Earth. Mr. *Law* thinks it absurd to imagine, that any one *that is not in Communion with a certain Sett of Men here, should be of the Communion of Saints hereafter*; the Bishop's and our first Reformers Crime is, their Reliance upon our Saviour's own Words, that, tho' there were no other Persons they could communicate with upon Earth, yet if *but two or three were gathered together in his Name, he would be in the midst of them*; which one would think were sufficient to make them a Church.

Still * 'tis a mighty Surprize, to Dr. *Snape*, and our Author to hear the Bishop declare *He knows no Confusion that he has endeavoured to introduce into the Church*. Here my Lord is to lay his Hand upon his Heart, and ask himself, *what is Confusion, but Difference and Division?* But surely there may be *Differences in Opinions*, without *Confusion*: Otherwise, I am afraid, there may be as much *Confusion*, in many Instances, amongst these very Church of England Men, as amongst any others. His Lordship, it seems, declares *there is no need of uniting*. What? No need of *uniting in Love and Charity*? So far from *this*, that he has told the † *Laity*, their *Practice of Sincerity*, instead of leaving them to any undue Latitude, or a Disregard of the Peace and Unity of Christians, will make them conscientiously solicitous about it, and resolved to prefer nothing before it, except Purity and Conscience.

* Page 14.

† Preservative, p. 97.

Where is then the dangerous Doctrine? Why, 'tis this; that there is no need of uniting in *TYRANNY*; of resting under, and unanimously submitting to, *AUTHORATIVE Disposers of the Salvation or Damnation of their Fellow Creatures*; no need of Authoritative Judges and Interpreters of Christ's Laws; who, instead of procuring the *Peace of Christianity*, have been the Causes of all the *Ignorance, Superstition, Cruelty, and Outrage*, that have for many Ages clouded the Glories, and confounded the Harmony of all Christian Churches.

But his Lordship * *has not given us the least Hint, that its better to be in the Communion of the Church of England, than not. Not one Hint against it, I am sure; when he was speaking not of any particular Church at all, but of the Church of Christ in general, and of the Gospel Terms of Salvation. But has he not exposed her Sacraments, and her Clergy? Yes; if telling her, that her deriving from Rome, by uninterrupted Succession, is nothing but an imaginary Trifle, be exposing her. But has he not, as much as in him lay, broke down every thing in her, that distinguishes Her from Fanatical Conventicles? Yes, if uninterrupted Popish Succession be the only difference between a true Episcopal Ministry, and an Unepiscopal and Fanatical one. But what has he left in her, that can any Way invite others into her Communion? Why, every thing that Christianity and the true Spirit*

of the *Reformation* intended should be left. *Are her Sacraments more regularly administred?* Yes, much better than in the *Church* your Friend would perswade us to derive all our Authority from. *Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoin Communion with her?* In *HER* Laws? Why, Laws, as Laws, are of the *same* Authority in *All Churches*. But, according to your Friends own Maxims, [pag. 23. 25, 26,] *No Church has a Right to be obeyed by every Individual that is Subject to it, in all Circumstances. Rational Creatures can pay no other Obedience but what comes from rational Motives; They must have Reason for what they do. And, if we think it unlawful to do any thing that the Church requires of us, we must not obey its Authority.* Well! And may we be in *God's Favour*, if, in such a Case, we do not obey it? He must say *this*, or else unsay the rest. If he *does* say it, he says the very same thing with the *Bishop*; whom yet he represents as a Destroyer of all *Church of England* Authority, for affirming there may be Cases where Men may not lose the Divine Favour for being of this or that Communion as different from ours. So strong a thing is *Truth*, that it will out sometimes. The very Men, who are Pleaders for *Tyranny*, cannot but bestow, now and then, a good Word upon true *Christian Liberty*.

I question not therefore, *Sir*, but your Friend will be as angry with *Me*, as *Dr. Snape* was with the *Bishop*, for telling him, *He said and unsaid, to the great Diversion of the Roman Catholics.* And he will perhaps be still more angry,

when I tell him further, that nothing can divert the *Roman Catholicks* more, than his *three Assertions* in this small Paragraph, *pag. 16.* First, That for his Lordship to *unsay what he has said* in his *Preservative and Sermon*, would mortify the *Roman Catholicks* more than all that he ever said or writ in his Life. Next, That *Rome* hath sent more Messengers to deny the *Necessity of any particular Communion*, [even their own;] to expose the *Validity of Sacraments*, [even their own;] and rally upon the *uninterrupted Succession of Priests*, than She has sent for the contrary. For that this is his Conclusion [tho' not expressed,] appears from his Last; That the *Papists* are no more provoked with his Lordship for these Discourses, than they were angry at *William Pen* for preaching up *Quakerism*: With which ridiculous Falsities, he concludes his Attack upon the *Preservative*.

III. As to the *Sermon*; the great thing that gives your Friend, and all his Lordship's Opposers so much Disturbance, is, *Church Power or Authority*. His Lordship is here accused as subverting *All Authority*, and is not allowed the least Advantage by guarding himself with the Word *Absolute*.

Let us now fix the Meaning of the *Terms* to be made use of, and then I shall leave you to judge what work Mr. *Law* has made in the next Twelve Pages.

The *Church*, in a *Pagan Country*, is the Body of Christians, living and worshipping as Christians, abstractedly from, and independent of, the State Laws of that Country as to Religious Affairs.

Affairs. The *Church*, in a *Christian* Country, is the Body of Christians in that *Christian* Country, or the *Church* coincident with the *State*, acting under its Protection, and by its Power, as to all Authority of Laws respecting the External Regimen in religious Matters.

As to the Phrase of *Authority* or *Power*, with respect to these *Bodies*, or any other *Bodies* or *Persons* whatever, the affixing or not affixing the Term of *Absolute* to it, makes no manner of difference. It will do his Lordship's Adversaries no Service, were he to leave out that Word, or had he never put it in. For, be not surprized, when I tell you, that [in the true and strict Propriety of the *Word*,] all *Power*, considered as *Power*, is either *Absolute*, or else 'tis no *Power* at all. A *Power* or *Authority* perfectly independent, and extending equally to all *Objects*, and all Circumstances of them, is a *Power* which can possibly [in that Sense of *Absolute*] belong to, and inhere in, but one *Subject*, viz. *God*. *Delegated Authority* is an *Authority* confined to a certain limited Number of *Things*, or Circumstances of those *Things*. But, so far as it goes, and with respect to *Things* or *Circumstances* it is concerned with, 'tis real, compleat, or absolute, and All Instances of it alike so; because every *Power* is adequate to the *Things* subjected to it: it being a plain Absurdity to say, that any *Power*, with respect to the *Things* it is properly concerned about, is partly *Power*, and partly *not Power*. Every *Authority* is full or absolute in whatever

whatever it essentially extends to; and where it extends not to, 'tis no Power *at all*.

Thus, for Instance. *Civil Government*, in general, hath an *absolute Authority* for providing for *Civil Peace* and *Property*: But to institute a *Religion*, or by Temporal Penalties to inforce it upon the Subject; to command any thing against *Nature*, the Dictates of *Reason*, or that is evidently destructive of the Ends of *Society* and all *Publick Good*, i. e. against the Will of *God* the Supreme Author of all Law and Government; in these things it is so far from having any *absolute Power*, that, in true Propriety of Speech, it hath no Power *at all*. The *Kings of Great-Britain* have an *absolute Prerogative Authority* to do many things not provided for by any exprefs *Laws*: But, in their own *Persons*, to make any *New Statute Laws*; or punish for not observing them, when so made; they have *no Authority*. In like manner, a *Christian Church*, agreeable to the Definition in our XIXth and XXth *Article*, hath a *Power* and an *Obligation* [and 'tis an *absolute* one too] to preach the *Gospel* or *Laws of Christ*, and to administer His *Sacraments*; as also to appoint for its own *Members* all such *External Observances*, as may be esteemed requisite to *Decency*, and to the more effectual *Improvement* in that *Worship* and *Religion*, wherein the *Affairs* of their *Conscience* and *Salvation* is properly concerned: But to make *New Laws* in *Matters of Conscience* and *Salvation*, or to be an *Authoritative Judge* or *Interpreter* of *Christ's Law*, or to force or impose His

or

or their *own Laws* upon Mankind by *Secular Penalties*, no *Church* hath the *least Power*. Whence it appears, that in Matters not at all within the Compass of the Churches Duty or Authority, the *Bishop* had no need of guarding his Propositions by the Word *Absolute*. For what is not *at all*, needs not to be distinguished or limited by any *Characters*; and that which *really is*, is *absolutely* what it is.

The Sum is this: If the Word *Absolute* relates to the *Extensiveness* of Authority with respect to *Objects* or *Things*, *God's Authority alone* is properly *Absolute*; because *that alone* is underived and Universal. If *absolute* signifies *uncontrouleable* in its *Kind*, with regard to the Things or Persons subjected to it, [which is indeed the true Notion of it in all *derived* and *delegated* Authority,] then all *Humane Authority* is either *absolute* or none *at all*; because every Instance of it, be the Things it extends to never so few, as *uncontrouleable* by those *Persons*, or in those *Things*, as any other that extends to never so *many* Things. The Right which Men have, of *examining* into the *Truth* or Authentickness of any Persons Authority, is no *Limitation* of the Authority *it self*, nor renders it [if it be Authority *at all*] less *absolute*. Examination is only a *Means* whereby, as rational Creatures, we come to know whether it *be* Authority or *no*. But when it is once found, and owned as such, 'tis, so far as it goes, owned for *uncontrouleable*, i. e. *absolute*, the same as *mere* or *real* Authority.

And

And now, Sir, when his Lordship's Assertions in this Matter are fairly stated, what have all his Adversaries, and Mr. Law in particular, to charge them with? His Lordship says, *That, as to the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation, [i. e. as to the Rule of Conscience, and the Terms of Salvation,] Christ hath himself fixed them already, and hath left no visible Human Authority behind him, [to alter any of them, or make new ones.] And again; No one, more than another, hath Authority to make new Laws, or to impose a Sense upon the old ones; or to judge, censure or punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters relating purely to Conscience, [i. e. can judge none by Rules of their own making, but must leave them to be judged by the Rules, and at the Time, of Christ's own appointing.] And what follows from this? Why, that Christ has left no Authority at all. What? No Authority to preach his Laws, because none to make new ones? No, it seems: For Christ's Kingdom relates to nothing but Conscience and Salvation; and therefore they who have no Authority as to Conscience and Salvation, can have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. As much as to say: No Body can act in a Kingdom, but as KINGS and LAW GIVERS; And if the Church or its Ministers have not the End [Mens Salvation] at their own Disposal, they can have no Authority to assist Men in knowing and making use of the Means appointed by Christ for that End.*

If

If therefore Dr. *Snape's* Charge be what his Lordship's Words plainly amount to, viz. * *That no one is invested with Authority from Christ to act for him, as a Judge in Matters purely relating to Conscience and Salvation, [which indeed would be to act against him;]* 'tis what his Lordship freely owns; and the *juring* and *non-juring*, *high and low*, *Churchmen and Dissenters*, take him very right, and, I am fully assured, can never confute him. But if thence they infer, that the *Bishop* denies to the Church *that Authority*, or *indispensable Duty*, which is described in our *XIXth* and *XXth Articles*; they conclude just as hastily and erroneously, as Mr. *Law* does.

Thus, Sir, you cannot, methinks, but see what your Friend's *Performance* has been in his *Four Arguments*, p. 19, 20. whereby he would prove the *Bishop* to have deprived the Church of exercising *any Authority* or *Duty* at all. Whatever he has *really proved*, is the very *thing* his Lordship professedly designs to maintain: But what your Friend *thinks* he has proved, is what my Lord meddles not with *at all*, in either his *Preservative* or *Sermon*.

1. Thus, the *Bishop* wholly *disallows* to any *Christians* the *Authority* [of being *Masters*] over other *Christians*; because they are the *Servants* of another *Master*. What follows from hence? It truly and as strongly concludes, according to

the *Bishop*, against *any* Authority of *that Kind*; against *one* Instance of it, as well as *another*. Which is certainly very right. But, if our Author will have any thing more than this, he must make it to conclude, *That, if Men cannot preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, as Masters and Lords over other Mens Faith and Behaviour, they cannot preach it at all as Ministers of Christ.*

2. The Bishop rejects an authoritative Judgment, Censure or Punishment in Matters of Conscience and Salvation. And what's the Consequence? The Bishop's Friends allow, *that this excludes every Degree, every Instance, of SUCH Authority in SUCH Matters.* But the Letter Writer must have nothing less than that *this excludes every Instance of Authority in all other Matters.* For if Authority and Conscience cannot suit together, says he, *Conscience rejects Authority as such.* But who told him, that Authority and Conscience can never suit together? An *Human Authoritative Judgment*, in Matters of Conscience and Salvation, cannot indeed consist with a free Use of Conscience or Reason. He himself allows it, * that *Men must have Reasons for what they do.* But an Authority to preach, instruct, admonish, exhort, and persuade Men into Obedience to the Laws of Christ, admirably well agrees with a free and diligent Exercise of Con-

* Page 25.

science and Reason, in hearing, believing, and obeying, to the best of Mens Abilities.

3, & 4. In the same blind manner he plunges forward against my Lord's Two next *Reasons* against *authoritative Judgment*, &c. *Christ*, says the Bishop, *does not interpose to convey Infallibility, or to assert the true Interpretation of his Laws.* Therefore, no Persons ought to set up themselves for infallible authoritative Interpreters of those Laws, or claim Obedience to their Interpretations as such. Nay, but this is not all, not half the *Consequence*, says our Friend; for my Lord affirms, *That if Infallibility is necessary to found an Obedience [an implicit one] upon, in Christ's Kingdom; 'tis plain, that no Body in Christ's Kingdom [supposing them fallible] hath any Right to command any [such implicit] Obedience:* Which is yet the *very thing* the Bishop and all his Advocates plead for. Or else thus: *If Infallibility be requisite towards an Authority of decisively interpreting Christ's Laws, then, because no Ministers or Churches are now infallible, none (it seems) can have any Authority, any Duty, of preaching or interpreting at all.* If the first of these be his intended Conclusion, 'tis my Lord's own, and a very certain Truth; if the latter be his Meaning, 'tis our Author's own, and a most notorious Falshood.

Lastly; Such *Church-Authority*, saith the Bishop, as hath been before described, would be the *taking of Christ's Kingdom out of his Hand.* This now, according to Mr. *Law*, is to down with all *Church-Authority* whatever. For if the

Authority of others [i. e. authoritative Judgment in Matters of Conscience and Salvation, and authoritative Interpretation of Christ's Laws, or making new Laws,] is inconsistent with Christ's being King of his own Kingdom, as most certainly it is; then every other Instance of Authority and Duty, even that of preaching the Gospel, and administering the Sacraments, in Conformity to Christ's own plain Will and Command, is (says Mr. Law) an Invasion of Christ's Right. What a vast Advantage is it, to be an excellent Logician!

He would be thought very sagacious, in discovering the *only* Difference between his Lordship's *Sermon*, and his *Defence* of it. The one, says he, *is so many Pages against Church Authority as such; [tho' the Bishop was so careful as to single out only those Instances that are claimed as Authority, but are indeed no Authority at all:]* The other, is a Confutation of the *Pope's Infallibility*. No, Sir! 'Tis not a Confutation of *THE Pope*, but of *ALL Popes*, and *all Popery* whatever, where-ever found, and by whomsoever challenged: Even *the very Popery*, which his Lordship's *Adversaries* do in *Effect* assert, tho' sometimes in *Words* they deny it. And tho' 'tis far from true, *that all the Lower House of Convocation unanimously conceived the Bishop's Doctrine tended to subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ*, yet, had they so

thought, it would have proved just thus much, and no more, *that they had been Men of like Passions with some others that have sat before them.*

Well; but his Lordship, it seems, has * the same Opinion himself, as to those Writings of his, with his *Adversaries*. As appears from his Turn upon Dr. *Snape*; who was maintaining the Church-Authority opposed by the *Bishop*, and yet affirming *that no Church-Authority was to be obeyed in any thing contrary, [i. e. thought to be contrary by any Members,] to the revealed Word of God. Glorious absolute Authority indeed, [replies my Lord,] in your own Account, to which Christ's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examined into his own Declarations, and then they obey not them, but him!*

Here the Bishop is made to deny all Authority that is not absolute, *i. e.* which is not as extensive in the Matters of Conscience and Salvation as Christ's was. [In which Sense, he might indeed rightly deny it.] But your Friend, Sir, takes him quite wrong. For the Bishop was not here speaking of any *such Authority*, but of Dr. *Snape's* Notion of Church-Authority, which is a Contradiction to it self. The Bishop has left us all that Authority and Command to preach and administer Christ's Sacraments, which is mentioned in our XXth Article: But he is against all Authority in Matters of Conscience and Salvation. And this is the fundamental Difference between

Rome and the Reformed, between Christ and Antichrist.

Most impertinent therefore are the boasting *Returns* your Friend makes upon the *Bishop*, in the two † following Pages, which are to be brought Home to his own Door.

First; Our Saviour had Authority to judge of Mens Consciences, because he it was that gave them the Rules of Conscience, and knew what was in Man. He had and hath Authority to acquit or condemn Men, as to the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation; because all Power is given him in Heaven and Earth, and all Judgment is committed to him. Glorious Authority of Christ, if this Degree of it be peculiar to himself, and is not continued down to fallible and passionate Men!

Again; The Apostles were sent into the World, with Authority to give repeated Confirmation to Christ's Religion by Miracles, and to declare his Laws in an authoritative Way, because inspired by Him to that Purpose. Glorious Authority of the Apostles, if their uninspired Followers in the Ministry cannot claim the same Reverence and Obedience, (as Interpreters of those Laws,) with them that were inspired!

The Sacraments are allowed to be [in what Sense our Author means I know not] instituted external Means of Grace. Now let them but be supposed to have this Grace absolutely confined to the Hands of uninterrupted Succession,

Men, whom no Protestant in the World knows where to find, except a few *Nonjurors* in *England*; and then they are *glorious Means* indeed!

The *British Government* [the *Legislature*, not the *King*,] hath an Authority to make all Laws for preserving the fundamental Purposes of Government, and is to compel Obedience to their several Institutions. But were our *Nonjurors* able to translate from the *Estates* of the Realm their Proportion of this Authority, and place the whole in a *King* solely, and in a *Popish King* too, over *Protestant Subjects*; it would be then a *glorious Authority* indeed!

Lastly; The *Church*, [if you please, the *Ministers* of the *Church*,] have *Authority*, to preach, explain, and persuade Men to embrace and practise the Religion of *Christ*, by all Arguments and Motives agreeable to the Nature of Religion and of *Truth*. But now, if some of this Sacred Function, not so true (it seems) to the Trust reposed in them as most of their Brethren, should look upon this under a somewhat different Idea, and consider it [according to the far more frequent Representations made of it in Scripture,] not so much a Power, Privilege, and Prerogative, as a bounden Duty, and indispensable Obligation: If, with St. Paul, they view themselves as Stewards, as Servants to others for Jesus Sake, not as Lords over their Faith; as Men that can do nothing against the Truth, but all for the Truth; remembering that *Wo be to them if they* [thus] *preach not the Gospel*: What a low and groveling Notion is this, of Men that are

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Successors of Christ and his Apostles? Whereas an *uninterrupted Succession*, give it but the Power supposed to be annexed, and the desirable *Privilege* inseparable from it; let it but be the same *Lordship* that *Christ* himself had, the same *Dominion* which the learned *Cardinal* affirmed to have been conferred upon *St. Peter* by that famous Commission, *Arise Peter, kill and eat*; Let but the *Secular Arm* be at the Command of the *Spiritual Pastors*, to stop the Mouths and even the Vitals of all Gainstayers or free Enquirers, to procure a *Peace* as profound as is that amongst the *Dead*, to force an Obedience as truly and religiously implicit as is that in *Turkey, Spain, or Portugal*; and then 'twill be a glorious *Authority* indeed!

I hope I may have said enough in the foregoing Pages, to shew the Impertinence of your Friend's Distinction between *absolute*, and * *real* or *mere* Authority, with respect either to Church or State: Since both *Church* and *State* Powers, nay all *Human Powers*, whether more or less *subordinate* to other Powers, are yet *absolute* in their own *Jurisdictions*. The only Question about the Nature of *any Authority* whatever, is, *To what Things it extends?* So far as any Instance of it does extend, it is so far *real* and *absolute*; in like manner as a Foot Square of solid *Matter* does as absolutely fill a Foot Square of *Space*, and is as *absolute Matter*,

as the *whole Mass* of *Matter* can be said to be *Matter*, and to fill *infinite Space*, supposing *Matter* were it self infinite.

What has your Friend got then by such a Distinction? Let us try it in the very Case of the *Church's enjoining Matters of Indifference*. When * the *Church enjoins Matters of Indifference*, is she obeyed for any reason, but for her mere *Authority*?

What is here meant by *mere Authority*? Is it *Authority only*, exclusive of all *Consideration* and *Examination*, whether the Things enjoined be really indifferent or no? If it be, 'tis the very same with the *absolute Authority* mentioned in the foregoing Page; and to *such* an Authority, your Friend *himself* allows no Obedience to be due. But if, without or with *Consideration* and *Examination*, the Things enjoined are allowed by the Members of the Church to be *indifferent*, and enjoined as *such*, and no otherwise; then the *Church*, or any *Christian Society*, [considered now only as *Christian*, and not coincident with the *State*,] have undoubtedly a Power to agree upon and enjoin such Things, for greater Decency and Conveniency in publick Worship, &c. And all its Members are obliged, out of a Principle of Love to Peace and Unity, to conform to them, and not, out of mere Humour, to dissent from them. And why the Power of thus proposing and appointing these allowed indifferent things may not be stiled an *absolute*, as well as a *real* or *mere Authority*.

ty, I see not. But if, again, any Christians should take upon them to enjoin any of these Things [in themselves never so indifferent] as *essential Terms of Christian Communion*; affixing *Penalties*, and excommunicating such as think it more proper to omit them; for doing this, I say, they are so far from being invested with a *mere Authority*, that they have *no Authority at all*; and their Fellow Christians have from Scripture very *little Encouragement* to obey them. As is most apparent from St. Paul's Discourse about *indifferent things*, Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8. and particularly in the Case of *Circumcision*, a thing *indifferent* as to *Christians*; which the Apostle complied with for preventing unnecessary Disputes, but always refused when *imposed* as a *necessary Term of Christian Communion*. In the *first* of which Cases, St. Paul circumcised Timothy, Acts 16. 3. In the *latter*, he absolutely refused to circumcise Titus, Gal. 2. 3, 4, 5. and declared to the whole Church of Galatia, Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing, Gal. 5. 2.

And lastly; For the Bishop's Adversaries to put this Case of *mere Authority*, as to the Church of England, seems the most *improper* and *confused* Question that can be: *viz.* Whether, in our *Christian Country*, where the State [by an *Act of Uniformity*, suppose] enjoins such or such *indifferent Things* to be observed, the Church is not obeyed for *HER mere Authority*?

Mr. Law's † Conclusion, That the Bishop's Denial of any *authoritative Judges in the Affairs*

of Conscience and Salvation, in the Christian Church, makes all Civil Government unlawful; is built upon Two Passages of Scripture, so shamefully perverted and abused, that he ought to be called upon to lay his Hand upon his Heart. In Dan. 4. 17. we read, *That the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men.* Was that the whole Text? Do not the next Words of the very same Verse, in the very same Breath, shew in what Sense God is said to rule in this Kingdom, viz. by giving it to whomsoever he will? Again, Isaiah saith of the Jewish Nation in particular, *The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King,* Isai. 33. 22. Do not the first of these Passages declare, that God's ruling as sole Supreme King over the Nations of the Earth, signifies his Disposal of them to Men as his Deputies and Vicegerents, according to the good Will of his Providence? Does the latter so much as seem to deny, that, because God was more immediately and particularly the Lawgiver to the Jewish Nation, he was therefore to permit no Human Judges, Kings, or Magistrates under Him?

And why this curtailing, and jumbling of Texts together? Why, for the better imposing upon the Reader this mighty Conclusion against the Bishop, viz. *That, if it be an Usurpation upon Christ's Authority to have authoritative Judges and Vicegerents in the Church, where Christ has appointed NO such Vicegerents; it must therefore be an Usurpation upon God's Authority, for any to bear Rule in the State, where it is the plain Will of God there SHOULD be such Rulers.* And this, he says, is plain, to a Demonstration.

Well ; but if *Scripture* cannot clear this Consequence, *Reason* will. For God has given us *Reason* for our constant Guide ; which if duly attended to, would as certainly answer the Ends of Civil Life, as the Observance of the *Scriptures* would make us good Christians. Agreed, it would so. But the Case is ; Men do not duly attend to Reason, nor practise its real Dictates. Again : *Human Nature*, if left to it self, would neither answer the Ends of a Spiritual nor Civil Society. And what follows ? Therefore a constant visible Government in both, is equally necessary. What ! a visible Government, to compel Obedience, equally necessary in both ? By no means, Sir ; the Cases are very different : There is no manner of occasion for Two such independent Governments, especially in one Kingdom. The Civil Government is to compel Obedience to Reason, when nothing else will do ; because the Ends and Designs, the Peace and Happiness proposed by it, are purely Civil and Temporal, belonging to the present Life. Secular Peace, the Enjoyment of Property, and the like, are to be enjoyed by us now or not at all ; they belong to this Life, and must be now had, or else Governors and Subjects too are at an End, as to all happy relation they bear to each other. But Religion, the Christian Kingdom, is of quite another Kind. The chief and proper Blessings proposed by it, are not present, but future ; its Laws and Commands, have their Seat in the Mind and Conscience ; its true and sincere Subjects may, for ought we know, be, as to us, invisible ; God only knows who they

they really are : They are *Moral Agents*, and, in the Affairs of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, can have but one *Master*, one *Judge*, even Him who alone *knows what is in Man* ; to force such *Agents*, is the worst *Absurdity* ; and to *compel the Understanding*, is a *Contradiction*. So that the *Church's Authority* [its *Duty* I would chuse to say,] cannot be to *constrain*, in the *very Things* wherein *Christ's Subjects*, by the very *Nature* of his *Gospel*, are to be a *willing People* ; but its *Duty* is, to *exhort*, and *persuade*, to *preach*, and to *lead Men into his Truth*. His *Statute-Book* is the *Scripture* ; and those who are so fond of *After Laws*, may safely be referred to the *Experience* of more than a *Thousand Years*, wherein their beloved *authoritative Decisions*, and standing *Interpretations*, have been found so short, of attaining true *Peace* and greater *Edification*, that they have evidently been the *Original* and the *Nurseries* of that deplorable *Ignorance*, *Cruelty*, and *Superstition*, that hath over-spread the *Face* of *Christ's Kingdom*.

IV. A *fourth* * thing that gives your Friend *Uneasiness*, is, the *Bishop's manner* of expressing himself about the *Exclusion of the Papists from the Throne*. In the *Preservative* he tells us, *it was King James's Religion*, and that alone, which made him *uncapable* [and so all other *Papists*] of governing us *Protestants*. Yet in his *Answer* he says, the *Ground of their Exclusion* was not their *Religion* considered as such, but the *fatal, natu-*

* Page 29, &c.

ral, certain Effects of it upon themselves to our Destruction. These, it seems, are irreconcilable Expressions. So they may be to Men, whose Business is to wrest the plain Design of those they have a mind should not be rightly understood. By the Words, *as such*, his Lordship has given so clear a Distinction, that even *Papists* themselves ought not, in Justice, to complain of any Hardship in their Exclusion from *Protestant* Thrones. 'Tis not their *Religion*, considered barely as a different one from that of *Protestants*, as differing in many *speculative Doctrines*; no, nor in any *practical Usages*, that are, tho' never so contrary to ours, yet *possibly consistent* with the *Safety* of our *Community*, and the Ends of governing us. But 'tis their *Religion* considered with respect to *one* special and dreadful *Principle*, the *Principle* which obliges *Papists*, in Point of *Conscience*, to *destroy* the very Persons of such as will not forsake their *own*, to turn to *that* Religion. This the Bishop most plainly intended by * *Popery fully possessed*; which [when it is so,] *prompts and obliges its Votaries to ruin our Laws, and us too*: And therefore it not only warrants, but *obligeth* all *Protestant* Nations, by the eternal Law of Self-Preservation, to exclude *Popish* Princes from their Thrones: Which indeed it would not so oblige them to, when they consider *Popery* under the general *Notion* of a Religion different only, in many Points, from their own. This, Sir, is the fatal, certain Effect upon *Papists* [fully

* *Preservative*, p. 23, 25.

possessed of Popery] *to our Destruction*; and it does as effectually incapacitate them for our Throne, as either *Idiocy* or *Death* it self would do; tho' your Friend chose to endeavour to ridicule the Bishop's Distinction by those very *Parallels*.

Need a Man be *prodigious deep*, to discern that an Obligation to burn and destroy all that will not be of the same Sentiments, is a *fatal Effect* of the *Popish Religion*? He must be deep, says Mr. Law, or else he cannot see it; for *I am sure amongst Protestants there are no natural certain Effects of their Religion upon them*. That is; Protestants are generally not so good as they ought to be, and therefore *Papists* cutting of Protestants Throats is not so *bad* a thing as the Bishop would make it to be. Mr. Law was so deep, as to discern that a Bishop [meaning my Lord of Bangor] might be against *Episcopacy*; and yet so shallow, as not to be able to conceive there may be true *Christian Bishops* that do not derive from Rome; and both genuine *Sons* and *Fathers* of the Church too, that neither can nor will trace their Pedigree from the *Mother of Harlots*.

Lastly; How deep ought that Man to be, who would persuade a *Protestant Nation* to be governed by *Papists*; because it may so happen that all *Papists* are not alike, * that some *Papists* may possibly change or conceal their Religion, or leave it thro' a conscientious Conviction! Why are we Britons so obstinately bent upon Self-Preservati-

* Page 30, 31.

on, as to keep out an *unhappy Person* from our Throne for being [a *Pretender* and] a *Papist*, who, were he but once well seated, and had sent us all out of the World, might *POSSIBLY* consider better on't, and turn *Protestant*? King *Charles II.* 'tis thought, lived a *concealed Papist*; we lived pretty safe under him: And therefore how *inhuman* was it in us to exclude King *James*, tho' a *professed Papist*, and professedly endeavouring to make a Sacrifice of us, our *Laws*, and our *Liberties*!

Without doubt, Sir, if the World can be taught to reason no better than your Friend has done upon this Topick, *his Lordship's fine Discourses and Sermons against Popish Principles have been written to as little Purpose as if they had been directed to the Wind.* But, on the contrary, so it has fallen out, that a great many People have received Benefit by his Lordship's Discourses; great Numbers have been, and many more ('tis to be hoped) daily will be, confirmed by him against both *Popish* and *nonjuring* Principles. Nay, *some who were formerly Papists, are now true Protestants*; notwithstanding some unjust, uncharitable, and unchristian Representations that have been made to the contrary.

The Reflections your Friend casts, in the last place, upon the Bishop's Definition of *Prayer*; are such *trifling Quibbles*, that I am ashamed to give you any Trouble about them; and therefore conclude with assuring you, that I am, Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant.

F I N I S.